DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 272 420 SO 017 360

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TITLE Building the Global Dimension of the Multicultural Curriculum.
PUB DATE Jan 86
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Conference on Swann and the Global Dimension in Education (Bristol, England, January, 1986). For documents by the same author on related topics, see SO 017 361-362.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Pluralism; *Educational Change; Educational History; Educational Trends; Ethnic Groups; Foreign Countries; Global Approach; Minority Groups; *Multicultural Education; Racial Bias
IDENTIFIERS United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

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Building the Global Dimension of the Multicultural Curriculum

by

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(Sunderland Polytechnic)

A Paper

presented

at a

Conference on

Swann and the Global Dimension in Education

University of Bristol School of Education

Centre for Overseas Studies

January 1986

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Abstract of Talk by Professor James Lynch

Building the Global Dimension of the Multicultural Curriculum

This paper commences by identifying five major arguments for setting current developments of multicultural education within a more global context. It proceeds to define cultural diversity and to argue its historical and contemporary location and development. Against this background the goals of multicultural education are identified and a conceptualization of ethnic revitalization movements by Banks is briefly described. The central role of national discourse within a context of maximum freedom of expression is urged if an effective identification is to be made of shared values to guide 'moral' decisions in a multicultural society. Examples of international instruments are given which could 'pathfind' agreement on such moral behaviour and the experience of other societies in drawing up Charters of Rights for their citizens and legislative guidelines for their education systems is cited. The paper concludes by reiterating the need for a global dimension in the planning, implementation and evaluation of multicultural education in the United Kingdom.

Note

Professor James Lynch is Dean of the Faculty of Education at Sunderland Polytechnic. He is author/editor of a large number of articles and books on multicultural education, including *Teaching in the Multicultural School*. Ward Lock Educational, 1981; *The Multicultural Curriculum*. Batsford, 1983; *Multicultural Education: Principles and Practice*. Routledge, 1986 and, jointly with James Banks, *Multicultural Education in Western Societies*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston/Praeger, 1986. He has acted as a consultant to international organisations such as Unesco, Unicef and Unedbas and has worked recently in that capacity in Ethiopia, Somalia and the Arab States.

1. Cultural Diversity as an historical and international phenomenon

1.1 I have spent some considerable time over the past few years arguing that the debate in the United Kingdom about the principles, practice and promise of multicultural education has been conducted on too exclusive, narrow and ethnocentric a basis; with the result that multicultural education is bidding fair to become a kind of intellectual laundrette for a ragbag of shabby ideologies and special pleadings. Briefly, my argument has been that a philosophy of education which draws on the master ethic of respect for persons and their cultures cannot halt that process at the boundaries of the nation state. In any case, other nations are also multicultural and we may learn from them. Then, too, our cultural, political, environmental and economic interconnections on 'space capsule earth' are such that any educational philosophy which does not include those dimensions is inevitably incomplete, narrow, parochial and, therefore, inappropriate to a multicultural society. Finally, the struggle for human justice and against prejudice and discrimination cannot be restricted to national boundaries, nor can the identification of what is 'moral' behaviour in a multicultural society be left to mode, whim or polemic. It must rather be susceptible to national discourse in a context of maximum possible freedom of expression.

The major arguments will be well known to, even accepted by, most if not all, participants in this Conference, and I do not propose to labour the points again, but rather to concentrate instead on the way in which multicultural education must be informed by a global dimension, and by the formation of creative coalitions with existing initiatives and innovations in curriculum content. But, to summarize briefly, the major arguments for multicultural education to be set within a global context, we might say that:-

1. Respect for persons' cannot stop at Dover;
2. Others are building multicultural societies and we can learn from them;
3. The struggle against prejudice and discrimination cannot be a solely national one;
4. The interdependence of peoples necessitates a global multicultural education;
5. The identification of moral behaviour necessitates a supranational context.

1.2 Cultural diversity - i.e. the presence within one defined geographical area or nation state of a number of different cultural, linguistic, ethnic, credal or racial groups has a very long history, and it is a commonplace in the modern world. Because the specific composition of different nations does vary considerably, as does the cultural biography and profile of different regions and districts within those nations and across them internationally, I want to offer a commentary on the development of cultural pluralism and to introduce some of the theoretical explanations for that pluralism. Then I want to refer to examples of major international and overseas instruments and declarations which are of direct relevance to the development and implementation of multicultural education by teachers, committed to combatting prejudice and discrimination in all its various forms, such as racism, sexism, and credism, and to achieving greater respect for persons both nationally and internationally.

2. Cultural diversity and Western democratic societies

Cultural diversity has been a fact of life in the countries of East and West, North and South for many centuries. Ancient communities in the Australian continent, the Indian sub-continent, in North and South America and in Africa have been culturally heterogeneous from time immemorial. Notwithstanding a similar scenario in Europe, contemporary recognition of linguistic, cultural and religious diversity in Western societies in Europe is more recent. By the 19th century, the era of nationalism, cultural pluralism in Europe was already very marked in terms of differences in the religious, linguistic and ethnic background of its inhabitants. With the establishment of nation states in Europe, however, came a new broader role for education, as political cohesion was sought through educational and broader social policies. Whether in France, Great Britain or Imperial Germany, immense efforts were made to acculturate divergent and often conquered cultural groups into the dominant culture and language. In spite of these efforts, the European nation states always retained within their political boundaries very substantial ethnic minorities, whose cultures varied significantly from that of the dominant state. Even the post-World War I settlements, which attempted to establish culturally homogeneous nation states, did not eliminate that cultural diversity and in some cases only served to accentuate it. New nations such as Yugoslavia and older truncated ones such as Austria, both retained substantial minorities of religious, linguistic or ethnic kinds within their boundaries, whilst the border settlements between such countries as Germany on the one hand, and France, Denmark and Belgium on the other, resulted in increased cultural diversity. In some cases, as with the Danes in Germany and the Germans in Denmark, the legal, political and educational status of those minorities was internationally secured.

2.1 Post-Second World War developments

It was not until the end of the Second World War that three major factors came together to motivate educational policy-makers and educators to consider how education might respond to newer perceptions of cultural diversity.

These three factors were:

(1) the post-1945 economic expansion which demanded a large additional labour force, where recruitment was achieved by mass immigration;

(2) growing concern for human rights stemming from the atrocities of the Second World War and vitalized by new national and international organisations like the United Nations and its agencies such as Unesco;

(3) the resultant emergence of ethnic revitalization movements (Banks, 1986) which responded also to the disparity between the declared values of democratic societies towards their minorities and the realities of the operation of those societies.

These factors were to transform perceptions of the cultural composition of Western society and of the role of education and the school. They led to educational strategies with labels such as "intergroup", "intercultural", "multicultural", "multi-ethnic" or "multi-racial" education, "education in a multicultural society", "education for prejudice reduction" and more recently "anti-racist education". Not all the terms had in common an acceptance of permanent cultural pluralism and a rejection of assimilationist policies. Some were more radical than others; some less tolerant, some more. Indeed, in the same period, there has been only a gradual movement towards policies aimed at democratic inclusion and cultural pluralism, consistent with democratic values, rather than all-out integration.

Thus, whilst more recent developments in the field of multicultural education may have received their spur from the arrival of newer ethnic minorities in societies as diverse and separated as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and France, this is by no means the only motivator of that educational strategy, nor the only major parameter of its concerns. Older established and indigenous ethnic, racial, religious and other cultural minorities have contributed over centuries to cultural diversity in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and other Western democracies, as well as to other newer nation states in Africa and elsewhere. Not all culturally pluralist societies have sought to mirror that diversity in education and not all societies are committed to democratic cultural pluralism. Only a minority have sought to implement policies of multicultural education consistent with democratic ideals.

2.2 The goals of multicultural education

If education for cultural pluralism is to be effective, it must address the needs not only of minorities but also the education of majorities in terms of their values and the way they relate to their cultural minorities. It must aim to include minorities in the benefits of living in a free and democratic society as well as supporting their right to cultural diversity within an agreed legal framework.

Thus, it is increasingly seen as a priority of multicultural policies to educate majorities to enable their minorities to achieve access to educational and broader social equality as full members of the society while respecting their right to retain their own legitimate and distinctive cultures within the context of the 'national political covenant'. That covenant implies the acceptance of

common shared values such as the commitment to justice and human rights, as well as a national language for all.

The major goals of multicultural education may accordingly be defined as addressing:-

(1) the creative enhancement of cultural diversity and not solely the maintenance of existing cultures;

(2) the achievement of equality of educational opportunity for all regardless of sex, race, creed, ethnic background etc; and,

(3) the propagation of a sense of shared values, rights and access to political power.

The goals may be summarised as pluralism, equality and cohesion)PEC).

But different countries have reacted differently to the demands inherent in multicultural education. Watson (1979), for example, differentiates among the countries which have adopted policies of multicultural education as:

(1) those having deep-rooted racial and cultural diversity such as the Soviet Union;

(2) those having a cultural mix resulting largely from colonialism, such as France and Holland; and,

(3) those having become multicultural mainly as a result of voluntary immigration.

Whilst his categorisation invites further refinement, it also serves to alert us to the 'pluralism or pluralisms' inherent in cultural diversity and to the wide range of dimensions which contribute to such diversity.

2.3 Migration and Cultural Diversity

As stated above, migration has contributed substantially to the mosaic of modern Western democratic societies as well as those in the socialist countries and the Third World. Castles (1984) has identified five major patterns of post-war migration into western European countries:

(1) the return migration of settlers from former colonies such as the *pieds noirs* from Algeria and the Dutch from Indonesia;

(2) immigration of ethnically distinct citizens of colonies and former colonies;

(3) labour migration of mainly manual workers from areas such as the Mediterranean;

(4) migration of skilled employeed between highly developed countries; and,

(5) the entry of foreign refugees seeking political asylum.

In all Western countries, immigration regulations and legalisation have become more stringent over the past 15 or 20 years and the only exceptions to such stringency tend to be migrations of a *consequential, adoptive* or *refugee* kind. Mass migration to the "new worlds" of the United States, Canada, Australia continues and includes informal and illegal immigration, as between South American countries and the United States.

Differing patterns of migration combined with the differing political structure, cultural context, historical development and administrative organisation in different western countries have led to different views of, and responses to, cultural pluralism and particularly to the identification of the needs of newly arrived cultural groups. The educational and social responses of different countries are therefore often distinctly different from each other. Several authors have tried to conceptualize this interaction of challenge and response. Wirth (1976), for example, sees ethnic minorities responding to the surrounding society in one of four ways:

(1) assimilation; a complete abandonment of their cultural differences and absorption into the dominant culture;

(2) pluralism; the acceptance and toleration of their differences by dominant and majority communities;

(3) sesession of complete independence;

(4) militancy in an attempt to take power from a dominant or majority group.

Alternative options have been advocated, but within a democratic society where change is achieved by persuasion and discourse, cultural pluralism is the most likely to be adopted, since the only real alternative is the use of coercion which is incongruent with the underlying values of these societies. Most western societies, however, have hardly begun to involve minorities in the process of discourse, essential to the definition of shared values, against which political and narrower educational judgments can be made. Until they do, international instruments and agreements constitute one of the few marker posts for 'moral' behaviour in a multicultural society. I shall return to this point shortly.

2.4 Ethnic Revitalization Movements

A more recent conceptualization of the process of challenge and response, which has given birth to multicultural education, is offered by Banks (1986a) as part of what he describes as the emergence of *ethnic revitalization movements*. He envisages four major phases in educational support for equality on the part of currently victimized racial and cultural minorities. In the first phase, characterised by colonialism, imperialism, victimization and marginalization,

democratic societies attempt to close the gap between their democratic ideals and their social realities, sometimes by coercive or assimilationist methods. This only serves to raise expectations and demands on the part of victimized groups and leads inevitably to the next phase. This phase is characterized by ethnic polarization and a quest for identity by victimized ethnic groups, whose educational under-achievement cannot be explained in terms of racism, credism or sexism, because majority communities have not accepted those factors as legitimised explicators of such phenomena as inequality and underachievement.

The third phase to emerge is epitomized by discourse between minority and dominant ethnic groups and increasing coalitions which reduce ethnic polarization and facilitate the search for multi-causal explanations of the problems suffered by victimized groups. Minorities, having achieved the legitimisation of racism as one accepted cause of their problems, co-operate in the quest for further explanations and strategies to tackle their problems. A final phase sees the institutionalization of reforms proposed during the earlier phases which gradually become "institutionalized orthodoxies" and thus pave the way for the emergence of new ethnic revitalization movements to overturn that orthodoxy, but based this time on the acceptance of discourse as the means to such resolution.

Banks envisages a crucial role for education in facilitating the movement of society and individuals through these four phases, and in assisting individual students in developing healthier identification with their cultural group, which he sees as essential to healthy identifications at the succeeding national and global levels. In facilitating the development of the appropriate attitudes, knowledge and skills, this first stage of identification with one's own cultural group is thus essential to healthy attitudes to the nation state and the global community. It is thus an essential goal of any realistic multicultural education.

Banks' conceptualization is important for its four proposed developmental stages and for its central focus on the legitimization of race and racism as an explicator of the problems of disadvantaged visible minorities, this being an essential prerequisite to the development of more sophisticated multi-factor explanations and responses on the part of education to the needs of all citizens. It is also important for the way in which it offers a conceptualization, on a developmental basis of the relationship between three stages of multicultural education: community, national and global.

3. Educational Responses

But, the responses of western nations to the process of ethnic revitalization, as reflected in their educational policies and in the behaviour of their majority

communities have been essentially defensive, restrictive and exclusive, as they have sought to defend their hegemony and to marginalize the impact of minority cultures and groups (where they have recognised them at all). Only in very recent times, have there been isolated attempts to engage ethnic minorities in potent and equal discourse as a means of resolving conflicting interests. As new economic crises have accentuated the vicious circle of economic exclusion and cultural marginalization in which many members of ethnic minority communities are trapped, however, the alienation of those communities has increased, leading to crises in social cohesion, political disruption and urban unrest.

The refusal of majority communities to accept the elimination of racism onto their agenda for educational policy and practice and as an item for rigorous social and political action has led to increasing alienation on the part of many ethnic minority individuals and a polarization within democratic societies, as Banks suggests, between their declared and operative values. A legitimation crisis has thus developed, which can only be resolved by intensified discourse and co-operative political action. This has not yet happened. It is in this context of inaction, that the issue of race has been seen in several European countries, including the United Kingdom, as the major focus for societal and educational strategies. Such strategies are currently labelled *anti-racist*. This in turn has led to the rejection of broader strategies, aimed at increasing equality, by many members of minority communities and to a reappraisal of the aims and concerns of multicultural education, and in particular the sharpness of its focus on issues of race.

4. <u>The Central Role of Discourse</u>

Democratic societies need to engage in meaningful discourse with their minorities and to seek to come to terms with those minorities' perceptions of their own reality. The only alternative recourse would be to coercion and that would be fruitless, for it would vitiate the very values which democratic societies declare that they esteem. Cultural diversity then, must be made creative in school and society, by weaving together the inter-related principles of *freedom*, *discourse* and *rationality* (Lynch, 1986). For, as absolute standards governing the behaviour of individuals and groups decline, and legal measures alone are insufficient to regulate all aspects of life, the need is accentuated for new shared values, norms and mores to be generated by discourse. That discourse, if it is to be real, needs to be structurally inclusive of all cultural groups and to be conducted on a rational basis in the context of maximum freedom, i.e. without compulsion or coercion. (Rational discourse is required to set negotiated bounds or the consequence is licence, anarchy and disintegration). Without freedom, rationality in discourse may be slanted to the rationality of only one group, which will inhibit the discourse necessary for mutuality, i.e.

common determination and acceptance of negotiated and agreed values as a basis for social and political cohesion. But where are the pathfinders for such values?

5. Some International Dimensions of Multi-Cultural Education

Until racism as a legitimised explanation of the problems of victimized groups in most European societies has been more widely accepted, consideration of the important recognition of the tensions inherent in democratic society between the two educational goals of *social cohesion* and *cultural diversity* as being creative, has been deferred. Of the three major factors proposed as leading to multi-cultural education policy and practice in culturally plural society, we now consider in greater detail the second, i.e. concern with human rights after the Second World War. It sets an indispensible context to the aspirations of ethnic minorities to overthrow victimization and to direct educational policy and practice towards the goal of greater justice. Fundamental also to our study of cultural diversity is an understanding that democratic societies, whatever their own legislation in response to cultural pluralism, recognise that there are over-arching values and principles at the core of democratic cultural pluralism and related educational practice: the pathfinders referred to above.

5.1 Human Rights Instruments

By 1983 there were over 50 international declarations, covenants and agreements concerning human rights (United Nations, 1978, 1983). Whilst not all these had been agreed, signed nor indeed ratified after signature by all nations, these international instruments set the baseline for democratic societies. They include:-

- United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights, dating from 1948;
- the European Convention on Human Rights (1950);
- the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration for Marriages (1962);
- the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) together with the United Nations' General Assembly Declaration (1965);
- the International Covenant on Civil Rights (1966) and the UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (1978); and,
- the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979).

The Universal Declaration declares in Article (ii):

> "Everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other origin, national or social origin, property, birth or other status".

Similarly, the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages states:

> "No marriage shall be legally entered into without the full and free consent of both parties, such consent to be expressed by them in person after due publicity."

The subsequent General Assembly resolution added further -

> "Member States shall lefislate further action to specify a minimum age for marriage which in any case shall not be less than 15 years of age."

The United Nations' Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination was signed in 1963 and had (by April 1984) been ratified by 123 nations. It states:

> "Discrimination between human beings on the grounds of race, colour or ethnic orifins is an offence to human dignity and shall be condemned..."

and further

> "Particular efforts shall be made to prevent discrimination based on race, colour or ethnic origin especially in the field of civil rights, access to citizenship, education, religion, employment, occupation and housing."

This latter convention has been endorsed and updated by the UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (UNESCO, 1978) which was adopted and proclaimed by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 24th session on 27 November 1978. It states:

> "Any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, ethnic or national origin or religious intolerance motivated by racist considerations which destroys or compromises the sovereign equality of states and the rights of people to self determination, or which limits in an arbitrary or discriminatory manner the right of every human being and group to full development is incompatible with the requirements of the international order which is just and guarantees respect for human rights."

On the 25th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the United Nations convened in New York a Special General Assembly on 10 December 1973, which officially launched the decade of action to combat racism and racial discrimination.

Thus, racial prejudice and discrimination are not just morally wrong, nor are they solely illegal in terms of national legislation, or because they offend against local authority policy or school rules, but because they are declared to be outlawed, as an offence against humanity as codified in international moral instruments. Such instruments and their declarations provide an indispendable ethical base line for democratic cultural pluralism.

5.2 Regional Agreements

Regional agreements have also been concluded under the auspices of such organisations as The Council of Europe or The European Economic Community. The European Convention, for example, signed on 4 November 1950 and enforced from September 1953 and the Second Protocol to that Convention, which confers on the European Court of Human Rights its competence to give advisory opinions, have been increasingly utilised by citizens of the various nation states in Europe, not least from the United Kingdom, who do not have a Bill of Rights or their own and see their rights constrained or threatened by the state.

The Council of Europe's work in the field of human rights education in schools also dates from the late 1970s and has been addressed as a specific objective of the Council's second medium term plan and in its Declaration of 14 May 1981. The European Economic Community has also played a role in establishing the social, political and educational rights of migrant workers and their children notably in the Directive on Mother-Tongue Instruction (July 1977). Although it has been neglected by many nations, according to a recent EEC report, it nonetheless requires individual nation states to give account in its terms of their progress towards its stated common goals. It also sets an indispensable wider and regional context within which those wishing to implement politics of multicultural education have to see their own task.

5.3 The United States and Canada as examples

Particularly in the United States, developments in multiethnic education have been influenced and, in some cases, determined by the Civil Rights Movement. Legislation dismantling segregation resulted in the emergence in the 1960s of a potent Civil Rights Movement and, in response to riots in the mid and late 1960s, a whole series of Federal and State initiatives was taken to enforce civil rights legislation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbade discrimination on the bases of race, colour, religion or national origins in American public accommodation and education, in Federally assisted programmes, and in most areas of private employment. It marked the official start of the movement and the acceptance of race and racism as legitimised explanations of the problems of victimized ethnic minority groups. Judgments in the United States Federal and Districts Courts have played an important role in the shaping of educational policy and educators have faced a wide array of imperatives on how to achieve their goals.

In Canada, the Province of Ontario passed a Racial Discrimination Act as early as 1944, four years before the United Nations declaration on Human Rights. A Bill of Rights was passed in Canada as a whole in 1960. During a period of violence and unrest in the 1950s and early 60s, other Provinces responded,

establishing Human Rights Commissions, and a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was set up with the specific task of reconciling the maintenance of two basic (European) cultures in Canadian society. However, it was mainly as part of the process of the patriation of the Canadian Constitution that a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom was established for all citizens. Human Rights Commissions such as that proclaimed as law on 15 June 1982 for the Province of Ontario, with explicit Human Rights Codes, now exist at Federal level in all Canadian Provinces.

From the early 1980s massive resources were allocated to race relations, and in 1982 a race relations unit was established to improve understanding amongst Canadians of different racial backgrounds. This led to the establishment, in 1983, of a special Parliamentary Committee on the participation of visible minorities in Canadian education which reported to Parliament in 1984 with the urgent call for "Equality Now" - the title of its report.

Looked at critically, the American legislation and the Canadian Human Rights Codes and Commissions indicate gaps in European provision: the lack of commitment to granting all citizens a base line bill of democratic freedoms and rights, enforceable by law without a lengthy and costly process for those wishing to seek rectification of the infringement of their human rights, except at a regional level; a much tighter national structural and legislative framework, etc.

6. To conclude, let me reiterate what I said at the beginning. A multicultural education without a global dimension is incomplete and therefore impoverished. We are interdependent with others, we have common problems, struggles and destinies; as multiculturalists our basic ethic demands internationalism and - you never know - we might just learn something of value from others so that we can throw away all that retread rhetoric and those multicultural wheels we have been reinventing!

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JL/SH/12/85/436